

prying into the private conduct of students, he judged almost infallibly of the probable profit that they were receiving from their studies, and how far responsive their manhood was to the refined surroundings of college life. If it were plain that they did not assimilate the elements of the intellectual atmosphere, a note to parent or guardian frankly gave the evidences of the fact. The common and unfortunate deception of parents as to the progress of their sons was impossible to one of his upright character.

General Lee let nothing requisite to the due government of the college or the advancement of the individual students escape his attention. He weekly examined the reports of absences and failures in recitation, and retained clearly in his memory the standing of each student. The exactness of his memory in these particulars was indeed remarkable, and several interesting illustrations of this fact are upon record. On a visitor inquiring how a certain student was getting on, General Lee replied, in that tone of grave satire in which he occasionally indulged, "He is a quiet, orderly young man, but seems very careful *not to injure the health of his father's son*. He got last month only forty on his Greek, thirty-five on his Mathematics, forty-seven on his Latin, and fifty on his English; which is a very low standing, as one hundred is our maximum. Now, I do not want our young men to really injure their health, *but I wish them to come as near it as possible*."

On another occasion, when a certain name was called, General Lee remarked, "I am sorry to see that he has fallen back so far in his Mathematics."—"You are mistaken, general," said the professor; "he is one of the very best men in my class."—"He only got fifty-four last month," was the reply. On looking at the report, it was found that there had been a mistake in the copying, and that General Lee was correct according to the record.

During the earlier years of his incumbency the presence of emancipated slaves was naturally a disturbing element. The young Southerner had not adjusted his views to the new status of the colored race, and in the flush of freedom many of the negro population were arrogant and exasperating. General

Lee anxiously devoted his attention to the situation, and sought sternly to suppress all interference of the students with the negroes. Information was at one time brought to him that the students had deliberately organized to disturb a public meeting of colored people at Lexington. He at once posted the subjoined order upon the bulletin-board in the college hall:

"WASHINGTON COLLEGE,
"November 20, 1868.

"It has been reported to the faculty of Washington College that some of the students have threatened to disturb a public meeting of the colored people of Lexington, to be held at the fair-grounds this evening, the 20th instant.

"It is not believed that the students of this college, who have heretofore conducted themselves in such an exemplary manner, would do anything to disturb the public peace or bring discredit on themselves or the institution to which they belong; but it is feared that some, prompted by curiosity or a desire to witness the proceedings, may be present. The president therefore requests all students to abstain from attending this and all similar meetings, and thinks it only necessary to call their attention to the advantages of attending strictly, as heretofore, to their important duties at the college, and of, in no way, interfering with the business of others. From past experience they may feel certain that should any disturbance occur, efforts will be made to fix the blame on Washington College. It therefore behooves every student to keep away from all such assemblies.

"Respectfully,

"R. E. LEE,
"President of Washington College."

If the disturbance had ever been planned, this appeal from the president effectually prevented it. There is more than reasonable doubt, however, of the existence of any such design among the students. In the Reconstruction era there were circulated many false reports of collisions between the races and unjust treatment of colored people, that political advantage might result. General Lee understood the motive for these

aspersions of his students, and saw how readily his presence in the college could be made to lend plausibility to stories of acts of bitterness and hatred. But the majesty of truth came to be vindicated by his calm and sustained conduct. Every word and act of his exerted an influence tending to heal up sectional animosities, to force compliance with the governmental policy, and to inculcate all the indispensable qualities of good citizenship.

This method of appeal to the students was irresistible. It was a happy substitute for the former mode of prescribing penalties after the commission of acts of folly. He successfully appealed to the honor and self-respect of the students as sufficient monitors against any excess in their college hilarity and pranks which might destroy the quiet and rest of peaceful citizens. During his presidency few instances occurred within that community of those students' sports so familiar and annoying in college towns.

In strict conformity with this demand for order and quiet General Lee shortened the Christmas recess. The college exercises had customarily been suspended at Christmas-time for ten days, but the delay in their return to the institution generally disarranged the orderly life of the students. The interval permitted great temptations to beset those who did not avail themselves of it to visit their homes. Released from all restraints of study and attendance, they were easily susceptible to the irregular habits which mark the season of good-will. In order to overcome this relaxation of discipline, the new president did away with the Christmas vacation, and in its place suspended academic exercises for three days "to enable the students to join in the rites and services appropriate to the occasion." He added, "While enjoying these privileges with grateful hearts, all are urged to do or countenance nothing which may disturb the peace, harmony, and happiness that should pervade a Christian community."

One striking feature of President Lee's collegiate incumbency was the religious spirit which animated the institution. He had been from childhood a member of the Church of his ancestors, the Protestant Episcopal. But his religion had a

genuine catholicity of character. The dogmas of sects were less to him than the essential and universal truths of spiritual faith. Therefore, when the new chapel he had planned was completed under his supervision the pastors of four congregations, at his invitation, officiated at the devotional exercises. Each student could thus attend worship in conformity with his own views or in compliance with parental choice. Upon these chapel devotions General Lee was an unfailing attendant, and his religious sincerity had a marked influence upon all about him.

He fostered the organization of a Young Men's Christian Association among the students, making liberal contributions to its fund and donating to it a specially collected library. In his reports to the Board of Trustees he gave detailed mention of this society, and dwelt upon the religious influence it exerted. Upon the matriculation of a new student his religious faith was inquired into, and it was sought at once to bring him in close relations with the pastor of the Church of his belief. Nothing better illustrated General Lee's theory of collegiate training than did this tender solicitude for the spiritual welfare and culture of his students. He had a loftier idea of education than that comprised in the laborious task of the textbook. His view of a true education embraced the moral expansion of mind and soul, the implanting of high principles of manhood and of a delicate sense of honor, and he often expressed himself as feeling that his duty would be ill done were not his students led to become consistent Christians. His own life exemplified his teachings. A member of a church (not his own), who had known him intimately for years, said that "his lips were never soiled by a profane or obscene word, and that when the provocation was great for a display of angry feelings, it was his course to use the 'soft answer which turneth away wrath.'"

In no spirit of undue eulogy it may be said that General Lee was the ideal college president. There have been many others who stand forth more prominent in educational annals—some noted for the accumulation of pedantry, others for deep and valuable research in special fields of learning of benefit to man-

kind, and still others for polemical ability; but few have presented that happy combination of qualities which makes the working president. It is not our intention to ascribe remarkable learning to General Lee, though no one without injustice can depreciate his broad culture. But as an executive officer, patiently and indefatigably giving personal attention to details and achieving well-rounded results, the meed of praise should be unstinted.

He occupied the presidency not to enjoy a sinecure at the mere outlay of his great reputation. He was an actual, steadfast laborer with a well-defined plan to consummate, and his zeal never flagged. No grander duty was ever conceived and heroically self-imposed than that of educating the Southern youth into a spirit of loyalty to the new conditions and the transformation of the social fabric which had resulted from the war, and only through a peaceful obedience to which could the future peace and harmony of the country be assured. It was this sense of obligation which prompted General Lee to accept the college presidency, and its unremitting impulses can be traced in systematical action throughout his career at Washington College. There was a preconceived policy which had a consecutive and consistent execution.

The affectionate regard entertained for General Lee by the college faculty and his many friends in the South was shown in numerous manifestations. General Ewell contributed to the college endowment five hundred dollars, with the expressed condition that it should be applied to increasing the president's salary. But General Lee treated this generous offer as he had many similar ones. The friendly motive which prompted the contribution was appreciated, but he argued that he already received more than his services were worth. He reviewed in a tone of personal distress the pressing needs of the college—its lack of apparatus, its inefficient library—and alluded wistfully to what a liberal endowment would accomplish, for "we must look to the rising generation for the restoration of the country."

In the last winter of his life General Lee's failing health excited alarm among his colleagues, and he was urged to find relaxation from the sustained tension of his duties in a South-

ern trip. He was reluctant to do so, since his absence would impose additional labors upon the members of the faculty, but he was at length induced to yield. While he was absent the Board of Trustees appropriated money for building him a handsome residence and settling an annuity of three thousand dollars upon his family. This gift, however, he peremptorily declined. The residence was erected under his watchful eye, its cost being far reduced below the estimates. But he persistently declined to consider it as his property, and was punctilious in his reference to it as "the President's House." He wrote to the Board: "Though fully sensible of the kindness of the Board, and justly appreciating the manner in which they sought to administer to my relief, I am unwilling that my family should become a tax to the college, but desire all its funds should be devoted to the purposes of education. I know that my wishes on this subject are equally shared by my wife. I feel full assurance that in case a competency should not be left to my wife, her children would never suffer her to want." However, after General Lee's death the trustees endeavored to secure Mrs. Lee's acceptance of a deed to the mansion and the annuity. Imbued with her husband's spirit, she declined.

There is something highly attractive in the spectacle of this great man, who had occupied so prominent a position in the eyes of the world, and whom thousands would have been glad to honor and enrich, refusing all gratuities and all adulation, and settling down in a quiet country town to perform the duties of a noble but arduous profession, without a shadow of discontent or gloom, and with nothing in his demeanor to show that he had not spent his life in the teaching and management of youth. The remarkable ability which he displayed in this new field of duty goes to show that he was a man of varied intellectual powers, and one who, if he had not been thrown by chance into the life of a soldier, could not have failed to make his mark in any profession he might have undertaken.

Such limitations as he had were certainly not unknown to himself, and he was not the man to accept any position whose duties he did not feel competent to perform under the impulse

of the honor or emolument which he might thereby attain. This fact is clearly brought out in a conversation related by Hon. B. H. Hill which took place during the last years of the war. Meeting him on the streets of Richmond, Mr. Hill said, "General, I wish you would give us your opinion as to the propriety of changing the seat of Government and going farther south."

"That is a political question, Mr. Hill, and you politicians must determine it. I shall endeavor to take care of the army, and you must make the laws and control the Government."

"Ah, general," said Mr. Hill, "but you will have to change that rule, and form and express political opinions, for if we establish our independence the people will make you Mr. Davis's successor."

"Never, sir," he replied with a firm dignity that belonged only to Lee: "that I will never permit. Whatever talents I may possess (and they are but limited) are military talents. My education and training are military. I think the military and civil talents are distinct if not different, and full duty in either sphere is about as much as one man can qualify himself to perform. I shall not do the people the injustice to accept high civil office with whose questions it has not been my business to become familiar."

"Well, but, general, history does not sustain your view. Cæsar and Frederick of Prussia and Bonaparte were great statesmen as well as great generals."

"And great tyrants," he promptly responded. "I speak of the proper rule in republics, where, I think, we should have neither military statesmen nor political generals."

"But Washington was both, and yet not a tyrant."

With a beautiful smile he responded, "Washington was an exception to all rule, and there was none like him."

This evidence of self-knowledge and this exhibition of self-abnegation were in keeping with the character of the man, and afford a lesson which few men in General Lee's position have taught. In his whole life he exhibited an ambition not for self, but for the discharge of what he conscientiously deemed his duty; and no allurements or emoluments of place or profit

could seduce him from his firmly-fixed convictions. The truly wise and patriotic man is he who, like General Lee, has fully gauged his powers, and who will not let thirst for honor or love of power lead him to accept an office whose duties he has been unfitted by nature and education to properly perform.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOME AND SOCIETY LIFE.

Correspondence.—Requested to Enter Public Life.—Advice to Soldiers.—Declines Publicity.—Offer of Lucrative Situations.—Private Testimonials.—Character of Lee's Letters.—Social Intercourse.—Love of Children.—Anecdotes.—Ride to the Peaks of Otter.—Incident.—Home Life.—Farming Advice.—Letter to G. W. C. Lee.—Letter to his Daughter.—A Visitor's Description.—Hospitality.—A Pleasant Dinner.—Tomato-canning.—Another Visit.—War Relics.—An Accident.—The Saddle-blanket.

DURING the period covered by the preceding chapter General Lee lived a non-official as well as an official life. He was a citizen of Lexington—or perhaps we should say a citizen of the world—as well as a college president. And it is his life as a citizen which we have next to review. That he took pleasure in this new phase of existence he himself testifies: “For my own part, I much enjoy the charms of civil life, and find too late that I have wasted the best years of my existence.” It could indeed hardly have been otherwise with one of his ardent family affection, and who had for so many years been deprived of the peaceful enjoyments of home life and social intercourse.

His correspondence in relation to matters distinct from his collegiate position was extensive and varied. Several applications were made to him for material by persons who desired to write his biography. To each he answered that whatever his life possessed of interest was connected with public events, the chronicles of which were at easy command. He writes to a lady: “I know of nothing good I could tell you of myself, and I fear I should not like to say any evil.”

There is cumulative evidence throughout his letters of his unalterable purpose to aid in the regeneration of the South and to devote his tireless energies to restoring the unity of the nation. He writes General Beauregard a letter, the appended

extract from which breathes a noble spirit of patriotism, and to the candid mind must be conclusive testimony of General Lee's loyalty to the Government:

"I think the South requires the aid of her sons now more than at any period of her history. As you ask my purpose, I will state that I have no thought of abandoning her unless compelled to do so. After the surrender of the Southern armies in April the revolution in the opinions and feelings of the people seemed so complete, and the return of the Southern States into the Union of all the States so inevitable, that it became, in my opinion, the duty of every citizen, the contest being virtually ended, to cease opposition and place himself in a position to serve the country. I therefore, upon the promulgation of the proclamation of President Johnson of 29th of May, which indicated his policy in the restoration of peace, determined to comply with its requirements, and applied on the 13th of June to be embraced within its provisions. I have not heard the result of my application. Since then I have been elected to the presidency of Washington College, and have entered upon the duties of the office in the hope of being of some service to the noble youth of our country.

"I need not tell you that true patriotism sometimes requires of men to act exactly contrary at one period to that which it does at another, and the motive which impels them, the desire to do right, is precisely the same. The circumstances which govern their actions change, and their conduct must conform to the new order of things. History is full of illustrations of this: Washington himself is an example of this. At one time he fought against the French, under Braddock, in the service of the king of Great Britain; at another, he fought with the French at Yorktown, under the orders of the Continental Congress of America, against him. He has not been branded by the world with reproach for this, but his course has been applauded."

Again, he answers the query of a friend in New Orleans as to the propriety of taking the amnesty oath in this loyal strain: "If you intend to reside in this country, and wish to do your part in the restoration of your State and in the Government of

the country, which I think it the duty of every citizen to do, I know of no objection to your taking the amnesty oath which I have seen."

In 1867 there was a ruling desire in the minds of leading men of Virginia that General Lee should accept the nomination for governor of the State. Hon. Robert Ould communicated this wish to him, but political ambition was not burning in his breast. The welfare of Virginia was the crucial test to which he submitted the proffered honor, and the result seemed to compel his judgment to conclude against its acceptance. He candidly confessed that his feelings also induced him to prefer private life, which was more suitable to his condition, and in which he believed he could better advance the interests of the State. He saw that it was no time to indulge in personal or political considerations, and that high office could not be properly bestowed as a reward for supposed former services. He confided to Mr. Ould, for his private information, that he believed that his election "would be used by the dominant party to excite hostility toward the State and to injure the people in the eyes of the country." In conclusion he said: "I therefore cannot consent to become the instrument of bringing distress upon those whose prosperity and happiness are so dear to me. If my disfranchisement and privation of civil rights would secure to the citizens of the State the enjoyment of civil liberty and equal rights under the Constitution, I would willingly accept them in their stead."

General Jubal A. Early had formed the design of writing a narrative of his operations before leaving the Army of Northern Virginia, and the project was submitted for approval to General Lee. In commending it he added: "I would recommend, however, that, while giving facts which you think necessary for your own vindication, you omit all epithets or remarks calculated to excite bitterness or animosity between different sections of the country."

One could easily augment the testimony of his sincere regard for his native State, for a reinauguration of an era of good feeling and for the lifting up of the prostrate South. Just before his removal to Lexington he received numerous requests

for advice from soldiers who were being tempted by the vision of a new life in the Franco-Mexican empire. There is an evident reluctance to chill the ardor of emigrants beguiled by the Maximilian decree of encouragement, but he cannot refrain from declaring that "although prospects may not now be cheering, I have entertained the opinion that, unless prevented by circumstances or necessity, it would be better for them and the country for them to remain at their homes and share the fate of their respective States."

To Governor Letcher he writes more explicitly: "The interests of the State are therefore the same as those of the United States. Its prosperity will rise or fall with the welfare of the country. The duty of its citizens, then, appears to me too plain to admit of doubt. All should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war and to restore the blessings of peace. They should remain, if possible, in the country, promote harmony and good feeling, qualify themselves to vote, and elect to the State and general legislatures wise and patriotic men who will devote their abilities to the interests of the country and the healing of all dissensions. I have invariably recommended this course since the cessation of hostilities, and have endeavored to practise it myself."

General Lee shrank from appearing upon the public rostrum, and abstained even from attendance at meetings where his presence could be tortured into any interpretation hostile to peaceful submission. Hence he refused an invitation in April, 1867, to lecture before the Peabody Institute of New York. The declination must have been an additional sacrifice, for he was a known friend of the great philanthropist. In 1869, however, he yielded to a request for his photograph, which was placed among those of the "friends" of Mr. Peabody at the institute in Peabody, Mass. When the death of that noble benefactor occurred he penned a touching tribute to his memory.

While at Lexington repeated endeavors were made to allure him from college duties into business enterprises in which the promise of wealth was more flattering. His salary was but \$3000 per annum. The presidency of the Southern Life Insurance Company, with the salary of \$10,000, was tendered

him, but he wrote General John B. Gordon: "It would be a great pleasure to me to be associated with you, Hampton, B. H. Hill, and the other good men whose names I see on your list of directors, but I feel that I ought not to abandon the position I hold at Washington College at this time or as long as I can be of service to it." Just before his death he did accept the presidency of the Valley Railroad Company. His acquiescence was obtained by the forcible presentation of the advantages which would accrue to Washington College from the construction of the road.

Constant private testimonials of esteem and remembrance were sent to the old soldier. While, as has already been shown, he persistently refused proffers of pecuniary aid, and was unwilling that any funds should be diverted from the college endowment, yet he was never churlish in declining small tokens whose value was more suggestive than intrinsic. His notes acknowledging the receipts of the gifts are models of the epistolary art. A hat is sent from Baltimore, a saddle and a dressing-gown from a Southern Relief fair, a beaver robe from far-away Wyoming; an English Bible comes from distinguished members of Parliament; a translation of the *Iliad* is sent to him, and he writes to its author that it has furnished him his evening's recreation.

Throughout that final period of his life his correspondence was occupied with official matters, domestic interchanges of parental love and sympathy in family bereavements, patriotic appeals to let the issues of the war sink into oblivion, and with those minor notes of friendly intercourse which so help to exhibit the real man. No one can peruse the letters of General Lee, placed in chronological sequence, without being impressed with the nobility of character which is infused into every sentence. They occupy a lofty plane, yet one that is not above the earth. Throughout them one finds the spirit of practical wisdom. There is not here the ecstasy of the saint nor the vapory imagination of the transcendentalist. A man of the world, trained in its rudest and most material shocks, writes, but ennobling virtues guide the pen.

In this epistolary collection may be found evidence of the

keen interest felt by General Lee in the adjudication of the question involving the confiscation of the Arlington estate. As the executor of the will of G. W. P. Custis he was alive to the duties of the trust. He did not survive the tedious litigation which eventually resulted in a decree by the United States Supreme Court of comparative compensation for the estate.

It remains to investigate the relations which existed between him and the people of Lexington, and to draw back with careful hand the curtain from the sacred shrine of his domestic life. The same personal devotion which went out to him from the hearts of his soldiery was displayed by the residents of the college town. Their intercourse was of the most cordial and agreeable character. The negroes manifested for him on all occasions the most profound respect. When he approached, either walking or mounted on his famous horse Traveller, they would stop, bow politely, and stand until he had passed. He never failed to acknowledge their salutes with kind and dignified courtesy.

(All the children knew and loved him, and felt no hesitation in approaching. A pleasant incident is related of Virginia Lee Letcher, his god-daughter, and her baby-sister, Fannie. Jennie had been followed by her persistent sister down the road, and all the coaxing and commanding of the six-year-old failed to make the younger turn home and leave her to continue her walk without company. Fannie had sat down by the roadside to pout, when General Lee came riding along. Jennie at once appealed to him: "General Lee, won't you make this child go home to her mother?" The general immediately rode over to the refractory child, leaned over from his saddle, and drew her up into his lap. There she sat in royal contentment, and was thus grandly escorted home. When Mrs. Letcher inquired of Jennie why she had given General Lee so much trouble, she received the naïve reply: "I couldn't make Fan go home, and I thought he could do anything." This delicious episode is yet remembered among Lexington people, though the veracious chronicler may have to pause in doubt between the introduction of the horseback ride and the variorum account which makes the occurrence pedestrian.]

There was a child at Lexington who was accustomed to clamber up by the side of General Lee at the college-chapel exercises, and who was so kindly treated that whenever he saw his distinguished friend he straightway assumed a position beside him. At the college commencement the little fellow glided from his mother's side and quietly stole up to the platform. Soon he was nestled at the feet of the dignified president and resting his head confidently upon the knees of his chosen patron. General Lee tenderly remained without moving, preferring to suffer from the constrained position rather than disturb the innocent slumberer. The youth has grown up into the Rev. Mr. Jones, a Baptist minister.

Circus-day was an event to the children of Lexington. They flocked around General Lee, and he was their escort by wholesale. He sat in the midst of them upon the boards of the tent, and it would have been difficult to estimate the relative amounts of enjoyment derived by him and his little guests.

In 1867, in company with his daughter Mildred, he rode on horseback to the Peaks of Otter, fifty miles from Lexington. At a ferry on the route the boatman chanced to be an old soldier. When the usual charge was tendered the rough mountaineer's eyes filled with tears, and he shook his head while saying, "I could not take pay from you, Master Robert: I have followed you in many a battle."

As father and daughter rode on a sudden shower came down upon them, and they galloped up to a log hut by the roadside, and without ceremony sought shelter. The poor woman of the house did not view the intrusion with cordiality. Her floors were scrupulously clean and every footprint was an offence. On the wall were suspended rudely-colored portraits of Lee, Jackson, and Davis. When the storm abated the general stepped out to bring up the horses. In his momentary absence Miss Mildred gently intimated that the unceremonious caller was the original of one of the portraits. The woman was transfixed with astonishment, and, throwing up her hands, exclaimed, "Lord bless my soul! That I should have lived to have General Lee in my house!" When the general returned her gratitude knew no bounds, and every

attention was lavished upon the travellers. The opportunity of this long ride was taken to visit Mr. Buford, in whose house Mrs. Lee had found refuge on several occasions during the war.

General Lee's domestic life was noble in its purity, admirable in its loving indulgences and devotion, and happy in all the family pleasures that rule in refined homes. When one reflects upon the military qualities which won him rank as a ruler of men, his quiet home life, rich in all the affections, stands in admirable though striking antithesis; and yet the contrast disappears when his whole consistent career is passed in review. As a son his attachment to his mother knew no bounds. His affection for his wife was, if possible, even stronger. In social and domestic intercourse he was not the cold and austere man he appeared in the crisis of battle. No man more enjoyed quiet humor. In the home circle he was genial, captivating, and as unaffected in his ways as a child. He entered heartily into all the domestic rounds of amusement, and contributed by many little inventions to the enjoyment of guests. His children were fond of pets, and he indulged all their innocent propensities.

His wife had become a confirmed invalid, and to her he gave devoted attention. He spent much of his leisure time in her company, cheering her spirits by his conversation while he wheeled her invalid chair about.

A few of his family letters will disclose the mutual ties of affection and confidence which bound the members together. In October, 1867, he writes R. E. Lee, Jr.: "I am clear for your marriage, if you select a good wife. Otherwise, you had better remain as you are for a time. An improvident or uncongenial woman is worse than the *minks*."*

With what fatherly solicitude he watched over and counselled his children is admirably shown by this farmer's letter he pens his son in the spring of 1868:

"I am sorry to learn from your letter of the 1st that the winter has been so hard on your wheat. I hope, however, the present good weather is shedding its influence upon it, and

* The chief pest of the Virginia farmer is the *mink*.

that it will turn out better than it promises. You must take a lesson from the past season. What you do cultivate, do well. Improve and prepare your land in the best manner. Your labor will be less and your profits more. Your flat lands were always uncertain in wet winters. The uplands were more sure. . . .

"A farmer's motto should be 'Toil and trust.' I am glad you have got your lime and sown oats and clover. Do you use the drill or sow broadcast? I rode out the other day to Mr. A. C——'s, and went into the field where he was ploughing. I took great pleasure in following his ploughs around the circuit. He had four in operation. Three of them were held by his former comrades in the army, who are regularly employed by him, and much, he says, to his satisfaction and profit. People have got to work now. It is creditable to them to do so—their bodies and their minds are benefited by it, and those who can and will, will be advanced by it."

A letter to his eldest son, G. W. Custis Lee, written at an earlier period of his life, is so full of aphoristic wisdom and breathes such a high sense of duty and honor that we cannot refrain from introducing an extract from it here:

"You must study to be frank with the world: frankness is the child of honesty and courage. Say just what you mean to do on every occasion, and take it for granted you mean to do right. If a friend asks a favor, you should grant it if it is reasonable; if not, tell him plainly why you cannot: you will wrong him and wrong yourself by equivocation of any kind. Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or keep one; the man who requires you to do so is dearly purchased at a sacrifice. Deal kindly but firmly with all your classmates; you will find it the policy which wears best. Above all, do not appear to others what you are not. If you have any fault to find with any one, tell him, not others, of what you complain; there is no more dangerous experiment than that of undertaking to be one thing before a man's face and another behind his back. We should live, act, and say nothing to the injury of any one. It is not only better as a matter of principle, but it is the path of peace and honor.

"In regard to duty, let me, in conclusion of this hasty letter, inform you that nearly a hundred years ago there was a day of remarkable gloom and darkness, still known as 'the Dark Day'—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished as if by an eclipse. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and as its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on they shared in the general awe and terror. It was supposed by many that the Last Day, the day of judgment, had come. Some one, in the consternation of the hour, moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Puritan legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said that if the Last Day had come he desired to be found at his place doing his duty, and therefore moved that candles be brought in, so that the House could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind—the quietness of heavenly wisdom and inflexible willingness to obey present duty. Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more—you should never wish to do less. Never let me and your mother wear one gray hair for any lack of duty on your part."

In the light which letters like these shed around the man the perfect domesticity of his nature appears. All the tests of son, husband, and father he endures. He thus guides a daughter's mind:

"LEXINGTON, 21st Dec., 1867.

"MY DEAREST LIFE: I was glad to learn through your letter that you were well and happy. I was pleased to find, too, that while enjoying the kindness of your friends we were not forgotten. Experience will teach you that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, you will never receive such love as is felt for you by your father and mother: *that* lives through absence, difficulties, and times. I hope you will find time to read and improve your mind. Read history and works of truth—not novels and romances. Get correct views of life, and learn to see the world in its true light.

"We are getting on in the usual way. Agnes takes good care of us, and is always thoughtful and attentive. It is very

cold. The ground is covered with six inches of snow, and the mountains, as far as the eye can reach, elevate their white crests as monuments of winter. I must leave to your sisters a description of all the gayeties, and also an account of the 'Reading Club.' As far as I can judge, it is a great institution for the discussion of apples and chestnuts, but is quite innocent of the pleasures of literature.

"Our feline companions are flourishing. Young Baxter is growing in gracefulness and favor, and gives cat-like evidences of future worth. He indulges in the fashionable color of 'moon-light on the lake'—apparently a dingy hue of the kitchen—and is strictly aristocratic in appearance and conduct. Tom, surnamed the 'Nipper' from the manner in which he slaughters our enemies the rats and mice, is admired for his gravity and sobriety, as well as his strict attention to the pursuits of his race. They both feel your absence sorely. Traveller and Custis are both well, and pursue their usual dignified gait and habits, not led away by the frivolous entertainments of lectures and concerts. . . .

"Think always of your father, who loves you dearly.

"R. E. LEE."

The genial humor of this fatherly letter was a marked feature of General Lee's character. The relaxation from the dignity of outer life, mistaken for austerity by so many, is thus happily illustrated in the inner home circle.

A further insight into his character, as it was exemplified within the precincts of his home, is afforded by a visit so admirably recounted in the unaffected description of the lady visitor herself that we give it without abridgment:

"In the summer of 1866, General Lee and his family went for some weeks to the Rockbridge Baths, leaving the house and garden in charge of their excellent servant Caroline, who had come with them from Powhatan county. The vegetables were very abundant and fine, and Mrs. Lee greatly desired to have the tomatoes canned and made into catsup. As Caroline was not willing to undertake the work alone, Mrs. Lee asked me to spend a day in overlooking and directing the operation;

which I was glad to do. At the time appointed I went over to the house, expecting to spend a quiet but busy and pleasant day. The kettle was boiling, the tomatoes in great quantities ready for paring, and the cans standing ready to be filled. Several hours passed, and by half-past twelve good progress had been made toward filling some eight or ten half-gallon cans. Suddenly a step was heard on the porch upon which the kitchen opened, and before we could turn round General Lee walked in. He had ridden up from the baths to attend to some important letters, and, knowing that the house was closed except on that side, had come in that way.

"He greeted us both most kindly, but was much surprised to see me in the kitchen. When he learned how matters stood, he became anxious to know what preparations had been made for dinner for me. Some broiled ham and eggs, with bread and butter, were what Caroline had suggested, and with these I would have been more than satisfied; but the general would not hear of so simple a bill of fare. He ordered coffee, and asked if some fruit or cake could not be found. Neither of these dainties being on hand, and I assuring him that the dinner provided was ample if he could find satisfaction in it, he agreed that we should dine together. When the table was laid neither knives, forks, nor spoons could be found, everything having been carefully locked up and the keys put away.

"His large camp-chest, used during the Mexican War and also during the four years of our war, stood in the dining-room, and when the fruitless search was over the general asked if I would object to the use of the knives, forks, and spoons which for so many years had been kept there and used by him. I assured him the meal would be vastly more enjoyable with these than with any others; and when he had let me inspect the chest, he handling and explaining everything, we sat down at the table. He was as charming and as anxious to consult my comfort and pleasure as if I had been a queen. When the dishes were removed he fancied that the dinner was scarcely sufficient for one who, he thought, had been occupied, and would be constantly during the afternoon; so he insisted upon searching the pantry for something in the way of sweetmeats,

and soon found two jars, from one of which he produced some dried ginger, and from the other some delicious peach chips. No amount of begging could induce him to taste either, and I enjoyed the little dessert more than I can tell as he sat by chatting brightly and cutting the ginger in bits for me, while Caroline leisurely ate her own dinner and made ready for our afternoon's work.

"We sat in the parlor, the general reading and commenting on some of the many letters which daily came to him. Some amused him very much, and others he was very grave over. One, I remember, was from a lady asking him to find and send her a little Confederate orphan girl. She was to be of a certain age, a certain size, beautiful, a blonde, of gentle birth, interesting, with no vices, no oddities, and never to be molested by her relatives! Another was from the head of a convent in Wheeling offering to educate some ten or twelve Confederate orphan girls free of all charge, but upon condition that they became Romanists. This, I recollect, he said he could not agree to.

"When Caroline came to call me he made me promise not to overtax my strength and to rest before returning home. Several times during the evening he came into the kitchen to superintend, as he laughingly said, but really to see that I was not doing more than my share of the work; and nobody could have been more interested than he was in the proper seasoning for tomato catsup. When the tops had been soldered on the cans by the tinner, and Caroline had promised to put them safely away, I left her to put the corks in the bottles of catsup, and went into Mrs. Lee's room to rest a short time. The general came from his little study and insisted upon my going there to sit, as I did not care to lie down, and, putting aside his writing, he talked as he had done at dinner, in his own beautiful, genial way, making me feel perfectly at home.

"I remember his taking up a picture of his birthplace and telling me some little anecdotes of his boyhood. When I arose to come away he thanked me, and showed as much concern lest I should be over-fatigued by my day's work as if I had done something extraordinary. The remembrance of this day spent

with General Lee in his own house has been, and ever will be, greatly treasured by me, and there are many people who will, I feel sure, enjoy this little glimpse of the great soldier at home. Unfortunately, the tomatoes upon which we had bestowed so much care were never used by the family. Caroline put the cans into an unlocked safe on the back porch, and that very night they were all stolen. The catsup proved very nice.

"About two years after this I went over one morning in July with a young friend from Baltimore to call on Mrs. Lee. As we entered the house we could see through the back door several suits of uniform, blue and gray, with one or two Mexican blankets, hanging upon a line in the yard. We were taken into Mrs. Lee's room, and finding the general there I asked if the moths had got into his trunks. He replied that they had, and everything was being aired and inspected. He left the room a moment, and when he returned he brought a most beautiful Mexican blanket, woven in imitation of the Mexican flag and the gift of the women of the city of Mexico. This he prized most highly. After admiring and examining it carefully, we comforted him by the assurance that it was uninjured. Mrs. Lee asked him to show my friend some of the beautiful gifts received by him during the war, and which were then lying about his room. He took us into his study, where we saw, among other things, some beautiful gauntlets sent from England, and which had never been worn. On the table was a splendid sword in its scabbard. This I drew out, and, finding on one or both sides an inscription in French, asked for some explanation. He simply said it was sent from France, but was too fine for use, and then he put it aside, not wishing us to see how beautiful and laudatory the inscription was. He then took up another sword, plain and dull in appearance as compared with the other. This he showed with great pride. It was the sword presented to General Washington during or after the Revolutionary War, afterward given to the Patent Office by Mr. Custis, and after the Mexican War presented to General (Colonel) Lee by another Congress. This he kept with him during our war.

"With some little difficulty we induced him to give the

history of a handsome pair of silver spurs sent from Maryland, also of a beautiful yellow silk scarf worn once or twice on grand reviews. While he was busy with Miss B——, I espied on a small trunk, under a pile of clothes, a blue cloth saddle-blanket with some lettering in gold braid in the corners. Going over to it, I carefully drew it out, thereby turning completely over on the floor the clean clothes. His keen eyes immediately saw the mischief done, and with the exclamation, 'Oh, my clean clothes!' he stepped across the room and rescued the freshly-laundried garments. I was much confused and dismayed by my great awkwardness, but he most courteously and kindly assured me that they were unsoiled, at the same time placing them on the bed. The saddle-blanket proved to be a gorgeous affair, made and sent by some kind lady with the request that he would use it. This he had never done. In each corner were the words in rich gold thread, 'Honor to the brave!' He told us he had sent her word that until these were picked out he had no more right to use it than the poorest private who faithfully did his duty."

All the sentiments embalmed in his home letters, and all the memories of his home life cherished by his friends, combine to tell to the world the manner of man General Lee was in the society of his wife and children. Artless, sympathetic, solicitous, devoted, indulgent, fond of teasing, are descriptive terms whose accuracy must appear to all in the side-lights thrown upon the private circle.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEATH AND MEMORIAL CEREMONIES.

General Lee's Failing Health.—The Fatal Attack.—His Death.—Colonel Johnston's Testimony.—Mrs. Lee's Description of the Final Illness.—Effect of the News upon the South.—Procession to the Chapel.—Religious Observances.—The Funeral Ceremonies.—Great Meeting at Richmond.—Extracts from Addresses of Jefferson Davis, General Gordon, and Colonel Withers.—Testimony of Reverdy Johnson.—Letter from General Scott.—General Preston's Remarks.—The Lee Memorial Association.—The Valentine Recumbent Statue.—Ceremonies of its Reception.—Description of Statue and Chamber.—General Lee as a Christian.—His Feeling toward the North.—Selected Thoughts.—A Captain Rebuked.

IN the last year of General Lee's life his friends experienced many fluctuations of hope and despair respecting his health. In the arduous campaign of 1863 he had contracted a severe sore throat, the sequence of which was rheumatism of the heart-sac. The malady was intermittent, and so infrequently did he complain that few ever thought that his constitution was impaired. But in October, 1869, he was attacked by inflammation of the heart-sac, associated with rheumatism of the body. His friends persuaded him in the early spring of 1870 to spend six weeks in Florida and Georgia. He returned with more elated spirits, for his reception among old friends had been so cordial as to exorcise depression, though his ailment was not eradicated. Shortly afterward, feeling the steady advances of the disease, he began to express the belief that he had but a short time to remain upon this earth, and wished to resign from the presidency of the college, being conscious that his strength was inadequate to the performance of its duties. To this the faculty would not consent. His mere presence exerted an influence that could not be otherwise supplied.

In the summer he remained a few weeks at the Virginia Hot Springs, and was somewhat benefited. When the fall session

began he evinced an energy in the discharge of his college duties that deluded many into the fond hope that a new lease of life had been vouchsafed him. There was a manifestation of interest in affairs and an elation which are so often but the indications of an approaching end. The college year had continued only a few days when pleasing hope and all the exhilaration that was infused through the academic halls departed.

Upon Wednesday morning, September 28, 1870, General Lee was promptly at his desk, and gave his correspondence and other official matters the usual attention. After dinner, at four o'clock, there was a meeting of the vestry of Grace (Episcopal) Church, which he attended. A steady rain was falling and the air was quite chilly. (This rain poured down for several days and caused a flood that is yet remembered for its unusual destruction.) He presided at the meeting, sitting in the cold and damp church with only his military cloak loosely wrapped about him. The discussion over the rebuilding of the church and the increase of the rector's salary was protracted until after seven o'clock. One of his acts at this meeting was characteristic of him. When a deficit was announced as still existing in the subscriptions for the minister's salary, General Lee promptly assumed payment of the balance, though it was beyond any proportionate amount justly due from him.

Tea was waiting for him when he returned home. He approached the table, and stood as if to invoke grace. His family watched in terrible anxiety the mute lips and the look that came upon his face. He could not speak. Quietly he sat down in his chair. His expression told that he comprehended the functional failure. There was no paralysis of sensation or motion, no swoon, yet his weakness was marked. Drs. H. T. Barton and R. L. Madison were called in and administered the usual restoratives. When carried to his bed he gave silent indication of his resignation to the summons. He was treated for venous congestion, and the remedies appeared to produce favorable results. But there was no buoyancy of hope in the watchers by his side, and no expectation of recovery in his own mind. He knew he had been mortally stricken, and his own composed

waiting for the end was too firm in its decision to be influenced by momentary symptoms of improvement.

The seeming rally from the initial shock grew perceptibly greater until October 10th. But on the afternoon of that day his pulse became accelerated and his hurried breathing betokened a serious relapse. At midnight a chill of exhaustion supervened, and the intelligence of his critical condition was broken to his family. Through the next day he rapidly sank, and his dissolution was felt to be imminent at any hour. A few moments after nine on the morning of the 12th he calmly breathed his last.

Colonel William Preston Johnston, who watched almost constantly at his bedside, has thus eloquently and touchingly portrayed the sad scenes attendant upon his death:

"General Lee's closing hours were consonant with his noble and disciplined life. Never was more beautifully displayed how a long and severe education of mind and character enables the soul to pass with equal step through this supreme ordeal—never did the habits and qualities of a lifetime, solemnly gathered into a few last sad hours, more grandly maintain themselves amid the gloom and shadow of approaching death. The reticence, the self-contained composure, the obedience to proper authority, the magnanimity, and the Christian meekness that marked all his actions still preserved their sway, in spite of the inroads of disease and the creeping lethargy that weighed down his faculties.

"As the old hero lay in the darkened room or with the lamp and hearth-fire casting shadows upon his calm, noble front, all the massive grandeur of his form and face and brow remained, and death seemed to lose its terrors and to borrow a grace and dignity in sublime keeping with the life that was ebbing away. The great mind sank to its last repose almost with the equal poise of health. The few broken utterances that evinced at times a wandering intellect were spoken under the influence of the remedies administered; but as long as consciousness lasted there was evidence that all the high controlling influences of his whole life still ruled; and even when stupor was laying its cold hand on the intellectual perceptions, the moral

nature, with its complete orb of duties and affections, still asserted itself. A Southern poet has celebrated in song those last significant words, 'Strike the tent!' and a thousand voices were raised to give meaning to the uncertain sound when the dying man said, with emphasis, 'Tell Hill he *must* come up.' These sentences serve to show most touchingly through what fields the imagination was passing; but generally his words, though few, were coherent, and for the most part his silence was unbroken."

His widow, in a letter to an intimate friend, told the sad story of his last hours, and dwelt with sustaining trust upon their perfect Christian sublimity: "My husband came in. We had been waiting tea for him, and I remarked, 'You have kept us waiting a long time. Where have you been?' He did not reply, but stood up as if to say grace. Yet no word proceeded from his lips, and he sat down in his chair perfectly upright and with a sublime air of resignation on his countenance, and did not attempt a reply to our inquiries. That look was never to be forgotten, and I have no doubt he felt that his hour had come; for, though he submitted to the doctors, who were immediately summoned, and who had not even reached their homes from the same vestry-meeting, yet his whole demeanor during his illness showed one who had taken leave of earth. He never smiled, and rarely attempted to speak, except in his dreams, and then he wandered to those dreadful battlefields. Once, when Agnes urged him to take some medicine, which he always did with reluctance, he looked at her and said, 'It is no use.' But afterward he took it. When he became so much better the doctor said, 'You must soon get out and ride your favorite gray.' He shook his head most emphatically and looked upward. He slept a great deal, but knew us all, greeted us with a kindly pressure of the hand, and loved to have us around him. For the last forty-eight hours he seemed quite insensible of our presence. He breathed more heavily, and at last gently sank to rest with one deep-drawn sigh. And oh, what a glorious rest was in store for him!"

The death of General Lee was solemnly proclaimed to the residents of Lexington by the tolling of bells. With common

accord all business was suspended. Tokens of mourning appeared on all buildings. The schools were closed and the college exercises ceased. The grief manifested by the people was profound. The little children whom he had cherished, and who had entertained for him a reverential love, wept over the absence of one whose death in the full measure of its bereavement they scarce understood. Women were affected to tears, and strong men turned aside to repress their emotion. It was a personal loss to them. In the Southern States his death was deplored as a calamity. Citizens, societies, and all associations of men met in some manner of assemblage and recorded their sense of the sad event. Resolutions of condolence and respect were adopted. Legislatures paused in their proceedings to add to the tokens of grief. All professions, all callings in mercantile life, were represented in the tributes. Rarely has sorrow been so universal, and seldom has genuine affection entered so deeply into the mourning over the death of a public benefactor.

On the 14th of October the remains of the deceased hero were conveyed to the college chapel, where they lay in state until the hour of the final obsequies upon the next day. The procession which moved from the residence was formed under Prof. J. J. White as chief marshal, with assistants appointed by the students. The escort of honor was composed of Confederate soldiers. Following this guard and preceding the hearse came the clergy. The pall-bearers were twelve, representing the trustees, faculty, and students of Washington College, the authorities of the Virginia Military Institute, the soldiers of the Confederate army, and the citizens of the college town. Just in the rear of the hearse two old soldiers led Traveller, the celebrated war-horse, crape emblems appearing upon saddle and bridle. Then followed in the long cortège the college authorities, students, and citizens. When the casket was rested upon the dais within the chapel the procession filed slowly past, and each member looked for the last time upon the uncovered features of the dead. The body was attired in simple black. About the coffin rested floral emblems, the profuse tributes of loving hearts. Until the hour of interment upon Saturday a

student guard of honor paced with sentinel care about the dais.

Before the conveyance of the remains to the chapel, funeral exercises had been held of a simple character. Citizens and students made up the saddened congregation which gathered within the chapel-walls. Rev. Dr. Pendleton read from Psalm 27 : 8-11 and 28-40, and made application of its teachings to the life and death of General Lee. The minister was rarely endowed for his sorrowful mission. For forty-five years he had been associated with Lee as fellow-student, comrade-in-arms, and pastor. He spoke with the full equipment of knowledge and the devotion of friendship, and his tribute to the undeviating rectitude, the consistency of Christian character, that ruled the life-career of the distinguished dead was the eloquent utterance of heartfelt truths. In the beautiful and apposite words of the psalm, "The law of God was in his heart; therefore did none of his steps slide;" "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Dr. White, the pastor of Stonewall Jackson, and Rev. John William Jones, a chaplain in the Army of Northern Virginia, and intimately connected with General Lee, also made brief remarks upon the eminent qualities of the dead.

The day of the funeral found the sky unclouded. The air was bracing. The roads were almost unfit for travel, the effects of the recent freshet not having disappeared. But sorrowing people braved the discomforts. The Virginia Legislature sent a delegation, and various towns in the Commonwealth were represented. It had been determined to make the funeral rites and observances rigorously plain, for the wishes of the deceased, though they had not been expressed in words, were felt by all to be opposed to display. The whole manner of General Lee had given unerring evidence of his desire in this respect, and plainness was in perfect keeping with his lack of ostentation. All the ceremonies were marked by simple dignity.

The procession was formed at ten o'clock on Saturday morning on the college campus. The escort of honor was composed of officers and soldiers of the Confederate army. It moved solemnly onward through the streets of Lexington,

being joined at various points by the visiting delegations. The band of the Virginia Military Institute played a solemn dirge, bells tolled, and minute-guns were fired. But there was no attempt at display. No flag was to be seen in the long column. Buildings were festooned with black, and above them the flags were at half-staff. The Virginia Military Institute was notably draped with the emblems of grief. When the procession reached the chapel upon its return, the students and cadets, numbering about six hundred and fifty, marched through the chapel, past the remains, making their exit at an opposite doorway. The procession then filed into the church. Within the space allotted for the members of General Lee's family there sat also his attending physicians, Drs. Barton and Madison, and Colonels W. H. Taylor and C. S. Venable, who had been members of his staff. Upon the platform were seated the clergy and the faculties of the college and the institute.

No sermon was preached. With exquisite voice Rev. Dr. Pendleton read the burial service of the Episcopal Church. At its conclusion the casket was removed to the brick vault prepared for it within the college-chapel area. The top of the vault was level with the floor of the library. Upon its marble capping was the inscription,

“ROBERT EDWARD LEE,

BORN JANUARY 19, 1807;

DIED OCTOBER 12, 1870.”

The concluding services were conducted by the chaplain from the bank on the southern side of the chapel, in front of the vault. The hymn,

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,”

was sung by the assemblage after the coffin had been lowered into the vault. Thus in all simplicity were conducted the obsequies of the distinguished dead. There was not the pageantry of rank nor the formal and ostentatious accompaniments of less sincere sorrow. In all that great congregation each individual was present to testify the personal sorrow felt

for one whose greatness had never obliterated those qualities which, with admiration, win also affection.

[There were meetings of Confederate soldiers throughout the South—at New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Memphis, in other cities, and in many towns—to express the universal regret felt at the untimely demise of the great warrior.] At Richmond, on November 3d, a monster assemblage of his old soldiers gathered in obedience to a call from General Jubal A. Early, the senior in rank of all the officers of the Army of Northern Virginia. There was no distinction of rank observed in the invitation to this meeting. It included officers and privates of the army surrendered at Appomattox, men of other Confederate armies, and all the survivors of the navy. The immediate object was to secure concerted action in reference to the memorial association already inaugurated at Lexington.

Those who responded to this call were fully representative of military ranks. General and private mingled in committee, all rank forgotten and levelled in the common sorrow. General Early was temporary chairman. The ex-President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, was made the president. He was greeted with every manifestation of respect when he came forward to address the meeting. One extract may possess interest as bearing upon the single point of the relations subsisting between General Lee and Mr. Davis during the protracted struggle:

“Robert E. Lee was my associate and friend in the Military Academy, and we were friends until the hour of his death. We were associates and friends when he was a soldier and I a Congressman, and associates and friends when he led the armies of the Confederacy and I held a civil office, and therefore I may claim to speak as one who knew him. In the many sad scenes and perilous circumstances through which we passed together our conferences were frequent and full, yet never was there an occasion on which there was not entire harmony of purpose and accordance as to means. If ever there was difference of opinion, it was dissipated by discussion, and harmony was the result. I repeat, we never disagreed, and I may add that I never in my life saw in him the slightest tendency to self-seeking. It

was not his to make a record, it was not his to shift blame to other shoulders; but it was his, with an eye fixed upon the welfare of his country, never faltering, to follow the line of duty to the end. His was the heart that braved every difficulty: his was the mind that wrought victory out of defeat."

Tributes were paid to the dead chieftain by General John S. Preston of South Carolina, General John B. Gordon of Georgia, Colonel Charles Marshall of Virginia, Ex-Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia, Colonel Wm. Preston Johnston (son of Albert Sidney Johnston), and Ex-Senator Robert E. Withers of Virginia.

General Gordon's address was marked for its felicity of expression and affectionate warmth. He thus alluded in eloquent terms to one characteristic of General Lee:

"General Lee is known to the world only as a military man, but it is easy to divine from his history how mindful of all just authority, how observant of all constitutional restrictions, would have been his career as a civilian. When, near the conclusion of the war, darkness was thickening about the falling fortunes of the Confederacy, when its very life was in the sword of Lee, it was my proud privilege to note with special admiration the modest demeanor, the manly decorum, and the respectful homage which marked all his intercourse with the constituted authorities of his country. Clothed with all power, he hid its every symbol behind a genial modesty, and refused to exert it save in obedience to law. And even in his triumphant entry into the territory of the enemy, so regardful was he of civilized warfare that the observance of his general orders as to private property and private rights left the line of his march marked and marred by no devastated fields, charred ruins, or desolated homes."

Colonel Withers dwelt upon the mutual affection which controlled the hearts of General Lee and his men. "And why was this the predominant sentiment of his soldiery?" he asked. "The answer is obvious: Because he loved his men. His military achievements may have been rivalled, possibly surpassed, by other great commanders. Alexander, Marlborough, Wellington, Napoleon, each and all excited the admiration, enjoyed

the confidence, and aroused the enthusiasm of their soldiers; but none of these were loved as Lee was loved. They considered their soldiers as mere machines prepared to perform a certain part in the great drama of the battlefield. They regarded not the question of human life as a controlling element in their calculations: with unmoved eye and unquicken pulse they hurled their solid columns against the very face of destruction without reck or care for the destruction of life involved.

"But General Lee never forgot that his men were fellow-beings as well as soldiers. He cared for them with parental solicitude, nor ever relaxed in his efforts to promote their comfort and protect their lives. A striking exemplification of this trait can be found in the fact that it was his constant habit to turn over to the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospital such delicate viands as the partiality of friends furnished for his personal consumption, preferring for himself the plain fare of the camp that his sick soldiers might enjoy the unwonted luxuries. These facts were well known throughout the army, and hence his soldiery, though often ragged and emaciated, though suffering from privations and cold and nakedness, never faltered in their devotion nor abated one tittle of their love for him. They knew it was not his fault."

Colonel Charles S. Venable also paid a glowing tribute. The resolutions presented by him were cordially approved by the great meeting.

At a memorial meeting held in Baltimore, Hon. Reverdy Johnson joined in the general eulogy of the dead hero, with whom it had been his good fortune to be personally acquainted for many years. General Scott had more than once remarked in the presence of the speaker that his success in Mexico was largely due to the skill, valor, and undaunted energy of Robert E. Lee, and had stated his purpose to recommend him as his successor in the chief command of the army. Much as Scott regretted Lee's resignation in 1861, he never failed to say that he was convinced that Lee had taken that step from an imperative sense of duty. The veteran general was somewhat consoled by the reflection that in the conduct of the war he would have as his opponent a soldier worthy of every man's esteem,

and one who would never deviate from the strictest rules of civilized warfare. Mr. Johnson looked upon Robert E. Lee as worthy of all praise, peerless among men, and without an equal as a soldier. During the speaker's residence in England as representative of the United States at the court of Great Britain he had heard with delight the praise of Lee's character and ability from eminent soldiers and statesmen of that country. As one instance he referred to the praises bestowed upon the army order of June 26, 1863, issued during the campaign in Pennsylvania, in which Lee told his men not to forget that the honor of the army required them to observe the same humanity in the country of the enemy as in their own.

As confirmatory of the statement of General Scott's opinion of Lee may be consulted the following letter:

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
May 8, 1857.

"HON. J. B. FLOYD, SECRETARY OF WAR,

"SIR: I beg to ask that one of the vacant second lieutenantcies be given to W. H. F. Lee, son of Brevet Colonel R. E. Lee, at present on duty against the Comanches. I make this application mainly on the extraordinary merits of the father, the very best soldier that I ever saw in the field. But the son is himself a very remarkable youth, now about twenty, of a fine stature and constitution, a good linguist, a good mathematician, and about to graduate at Harvard University. He is also honorable and amiable, like his father, and dying to enter the army. I do not ask this commission as a favor, though if I had influence I should be happy to exert it in this case. My application is in the name of national justice, in part payment (and but a small part) of the debt due to the invaluable services of Colonel Lee.

"I have the honor to be, with high respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"WINFIELD SCOTT."

In addition to what has been said upon the subject of General Scott's high appreciation of Lee as a soldier, we cannot desist from giving one further testimony to the same effect in

consideration of the value of Scott's opinion in this particular and his excellent opportunities of knowing Lee's character and ability. In his memorial address at Louisville, General Preston related a conversation he had held with General Scott long before the Civil War, in which the latter declared that Lee was the greatest living soldier in America, and added with emphasis, "I tell you that if I were on my death-bed to-morrow, and the President of the United States should tell me that a great battle was to be fought for the liberty or slavery of the country, and he asked my judgment as to the ability of a commander, I would say with my dying breath, 'Let it be Robert E. Lee.'"

[The meeting at Richmond on November 3d and 4th resulted in the formation of the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the memorial resolutions authorized the erection of a monument at Richmond]. That worthy purpose has not yet been performed, though the subscriptions have reached almost the amount of \$100,000.

[Immediately after the funeral, however, the soldiers present met at Lexington and took the initial steps toward marking the resting-place of the departed general by an appropriate monument. That their purpose might be the better achieved, an act of incorporation was obtained from the Virginia Legislature in January, 1871, for "The Lee Memorial Association."] General John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky, the last Secretary of War of the Confederate States, was the president. [After the name of Washington College had been changed to that of Washington and Lee University, the executive committee determined to locate the mausoleum at Lexington and to attach it to the college chapel.] The association confided the statuary-work to the distinguished Virginia sculptor Edward V. Valentine, who in the spring of 1870 had modelled a bust of General Lee, the execution of which had been highly commended. His model for the proposed sarcophagus was readily accepted, Mrs. Lee having expressed a preference for his design. It was a recumbent figure after the school of Rauch's figure of Louise of Prussia in the mausoleum at Charlottenburg. The construction of the mausoleum was completed under the super-

to the chapel, and within the mausoleum Miss Julia Jackson, the daughter of General "Stonewall" Jackson, drew back the curtain from the exquisite marble figure.

Virginians entertain a feeling of pride not only that a memorial statue has been inaugurated to their honored chief, but also that this charming work of art is due to the hand of a native sculptor. The figure is of flawless white marble. General Lee is represented in uniform as sleeping upon a soldier's couch. One hand is upon his bosom and touches gently the drapery of his couch; the other lies by his side, resting upon his sword. The features and form are perfect. It is the majesty of repose, tranquil and graceful. The floor of the chamber in which it rests is tessellated in marble and tiles. The walls are of gray marble panels inserted in the dark pressed brick. There are receptacles for medallions in the walls, and upon one already placed is inscribed the name of Robert E. Lee, with the dates of his birth and death. The panels of the sarcophagus bear on one side the Lee coat of arms, and upon the other the armorial bearings of Virginia. The legend upon the panel at the foot repeats the name and dates: at the head a simple cross is carved.

In consonance with the funeral scenes to which this chapter has been devoted we may now allude particularly to General Lee's lofty conception of Christianity and his high ideal of religious duty. Upon his confirmation as a member of the Church, Bishop Johns said to him, "If you will be as faithful a soldier of the cross as you have been of your country, when your warfare is over I shall covet your crown."

He had chastened his spirit with the divine rod of forbearance. Forgiveness was a noble attribute. When a minister once denounced the North in terms of excessive bitterness, General Lee followed him to the door and said, "Doctor, there is a good old book which I read and you preach from which says, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.' Do you think your remarks this evening were quite in the spirit of that teaching?" And he added, "I have fought against the people of the North because I believed they were



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seeking to wrest from the South her dearest rights, but I have never cherished toward them bitter or vindictive feelings, and have never seen the day when I did not pray for them."

Soon after the harsh Reconstruction acts had been passed, against honorable protest and argument even within the dominant circles of Congressional government, some Confederate friends in the presence of General Lee burst forth in strains of invective against the unrelenting spirit which presided over the enactment of such statutes. General Lee took from the table some manuscript pages of his father's *Life*, which he was then editing, and read these lines:

"Learn from yon Orient shell to love thy foe,
And store with pearls the hand that brings thee woe;
Free, like yon rock, from base, vindictive pride,
Emblaze with gems the wrist that rends thy side.
Mark where yon tree rewards the stony shower
With fruit nectarious or the balmy flower;
All Nature cries aloud, Shall men do less
Than love the smiter and the railer bless?"

"These lines," said he, "were written in Arabia and by a Mohammedan, the poet of Shiraz, the immortal Hafiz; and ought not we, who profess to be governed by the principles of Christianity, to rise at least to the standard of this Mohammedan poet and learn to forgive our enemies?"

General Lee had the habit of writing on small slips of paper on his desk such thoughts as might occur to him. From a number of these a few may be selected:

"Honesty in its widest sense is always admirable. The trite saying that 'Honesty is the best policy' has met with the just criticism that honesty is not policy. This seems to be true. The real honest man is honest from conviction of what is right, not from policy."

"Those who oppose our purposes are not always to be regarded as our enemies. We usually think and act from our immediate surroundings. (See *Macaulay on Machiavelli*.)"

"The better rule is to judge our adversaries from their standpoint, not from ours."

"God disposes. This ought to satisfy us."

"Fame which does not result from good actions and achievements for the good of the whole people is not to be desired. Nero had fame (or rather notoriety). Who envies him?"

"No man can be so important in the world that he needs not the good-will and approval of others."

"'Charity should begin at home.' So says —. No, charity should have no beginning or ending."

The tolerance of General Lee for the religious faith of others was frequently illustrated. A Jewish soldier applied to his captain for permission to attend certain ceremonies at the synagogue at Richmond. The captain indorsed the request: "Disapproved: if such applications were granted the whole army would turn Jews or Shaking Quakers." When the document reached General Lee he wrote on it, "Approved, and respectfully returned to Captain —, with the advice that he should always respect the religious views and feelings of others."

The Christian character of General Lee was one in which the tenderness, forgiveness, philanthropy, and purity of the real disciple of the true Christ conception were the ruling impulses, and not the haughty, austere self-satisfaction or the unrelenting, exacting creed of those who consider themselves the elect.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WORLD'S ESTIMATE.

Summary of Lee's Career.—His Character as a Soldier; as an Instructor.—Newspaper Comments.—The New York *World*, *Herald*, and *Citizen*.—Halifax *Morning Chronicle*.—Statement of Alexander H. Stephens.—Lee's Noble Aspect.—He Consents to Give up his Command.—Sent to West Virginia.—General Starke's Narration.—Chief of Staff to Mr. Davis.—Engineering Duty in the South.—Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.—Roll-call of his Battles.—Swinton's Comment on the Army.—Resignation Correspondence.—Tribute of Philip Stanhope Worsley.—Concluding Poem.

THE biography of Robert E. Lee, the man whom future ages will undoubtedly name as the greatest military genius of the nineteenth century, has been given in the foregoing pages in all its stirring details, ending with a description of the well-merited honors which were paid to his memory after his death. This work has been a labor of love, and its termination is approached with regret, since we can never again hope to find so worthy a subject for our pen. Yet before bringing our work to an end there seem necessary some brief remarks upon the world's estimate of the dead hero, and a rapid review of his career and character as a fitting conclusion to the story of the great events of his life.

That the tone of this work has been eulogistic is freely admitted; yet it is not the eulogy of undue partiality, but that tribute of honor and respect which the honest writer involuntarily pays to the memory of a great man—one whom, like Washington, we may designate as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Throughout his whole life this greatness was at every point evinced. As a boy his tenderness of demeanor to his invalid mother displayed the filial sentiment in a degree that has never been surpassed. As a West Point cadet indications of his future eminence as a soldier and a man became evident to his friends and associates. Never in his earlier

army career did he desire to evade the most irksome or monotonous duty. He married happily, and in the long years of home felicity no German ideal of domesticity transcends the reality of his family relations. He is affectionate, solicitous, devoted. The clouds of war lower over him, and in the tumultuous doubts and dangers that assail men he follows unhesitatingly, unfalteringly, the beacon of duty. Allurements of rank and avoidance of disaster cannot beguile him from heeding the dictates of his cherished principles. Once decided upon a course of action consistent with his beliefs and ideas of right, there is no thought of recantation. He becomes without restraint and with earnest enthusiasm the Confederate leader. No greater wrong could be done his memory, no more cruel perversion of the truth be made, than to claim that during the civil strife duty and principle were contending in Robert E. Lee's breast, and that duty merely dominated. The exact student of his loyal expressions and of his avowed construction of the Federal Union will readily discover the reconciliation between his acts and views. He fought against what to him was armed aggression upon the constitutional rights of the South vouchsafed to it and to the North by the inviolable prescriptions of the organic law of the Union.

In that calamitous contest his genius and his prowess have compelled the plaudits of the world. His generalship was an exhibition of military genius in which the whole nation feels a lofty pride. To remarkable powers as a leader he added those qualities of self-abnegation, of moral grandeur, and of humane solicitude which constitute the true ideal of manliness, and the aggregate was a great military character, to find whose equal we would need to select the noblest attributes from many of the historic generals of the world.

When the convulsions of war subsided and peace spread her broad wings over a reunited land, Robert E. Lee nobly assumed a civic trust, and in the faithful execution of its duties added still another laurel to his wreath of honor. Submissive to the decision of events, he sheathed his sword and embraced the new career of instructing youth in the culture